

U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management
Kremmling Field Office
2103 E. Park Ave, PO Box 68, Kremmling, CO 80459

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

Walden Hollow Sanitation Salvage Sale 2 **DOI-BLM-CO-N02-2014-0050-CX**

Identifying Information

Project Title: Walden Hollow Sanitation Salvage Sale 2

Legal Description: Grand County, 6th P. M.; T. 2 N., R. 76 W., Section 22, 23

Applicant: Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

Casefile/Project Number: DOI-BLM-LLCON02000-2014-050-CX

Conformance with the Land Use Plan

The Proposed Action is subject to and is in conformance (43 CFR 1610.5) with the following land use plan:

Name of Plan: Kremmling Resource Management Plan (RMP), Record of Decision (ROD)

Date Approved: December 19, 1984; Updated February 1999

Decision Number/Page: II-6, page 10

Decision Language: “To manage all productive forest land that is suitable for producing a variety of forest products on a sustained yield basis. This action will create a healthy forest environment through continued forest management practices.”

The Proposed Action was designed in conformance with bureau standards and incorporates the Colorado BLM Standards for Public Land Health.

Proposed Action

Project Components and General Schedule

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is proposing to harvest dead, mistletoe infected, or diseased and wind throw susceptible trees on approximately 51 acres adjacent to private property in the Walden Hollow area near Lake Granby (see map). There was a NEPA document signed in 2012 that analyzed 151 acres of treatment in the Walden Hollow area, DOI-BLM-LLCON02000-2012-051-CX_WaldenHollowSalvage. Currently there are 151 acres under

contract using this categorical exclusion. Operations will continue this winter on the original sale.

These additional acres would be treated through timber sale contracts, vegetative contracts, or by other means (e.g. stewardship contracts, service contracts, or BLM crews). The treatments would be implemented with conventional, ground-based logging equipment and/or by hand crews with chainsaws. It is anticipated that the activities described in the proposed action would be completed in four to five years, although monitoring could continue for some time after that. This sale would most likely be negotiated with the current purchaser since there is no public access to the sale area. Trees that would likely be wind-thrown, if left standing after harvest, would be cut as well (mostly large subalpine fir and Douglas-fir). The project would remove diseased, dead, and dying trees, reduce the spread of dwarf mistletoe to recently established seedlings, and salvage dead and dying trees while they still retain some value. The treatment would also reduce hazardous fuels and facilitate healthy regeneration on public lands adjacent to private lands while, at the same time, retaining the live healthy trees that remain on the site.

Although these forested stands are primarily comprised of mature lodgepole pine, other tree species, mainly aspen, Douglas-fir, and subalpine fir, are also present. Recent field visits have found that the majority of the mature lodgepole pine in the area has experienced high rates of mortality due to the mountain pine beetle (MPB) epidemic and much of the surviving lodgepole is infected with dwarf mistletoe (DMT). Although distribution is sporadic, there has been a recent influx of lodgepole pine seedlings in the understory. This is a result of increased sunlight reaching the forest floor as pine needles and small branches have fallen from dead trees. Landowners surrounding the BLM parcels have implemented forest management treatments on their lands to salvage dead timber, reduce hazardous fuels, and promote regeneration of lodgepole pine and aspen.

General Design Features

- All lodgepole pine trees that are five inches or greater diameter breast height (DBH), as well as other conifer trees that are nine inches or greater DBH and meet the above criteria, would be designated by the BLM for removal. Lodgepole pine trees that are four inches DBH or less and other conifer trees that are less than nine inches DBH may be removed by the Purchaser or in a subsequent treatment if they are dead, disease/insect infested, or otherwise damaged. Healthy live lodgepole pine less than five inches DBH and other conifer trees, as well as aspen, would be retained where feasible.
- Less than 0.5 miles of temporary road or snow road construction is anticipated. There are existing native surface road spurs that branch off of the existing private road that would provide access to the units. There is currently a temporary road built into the harvest area. Temporary roads would be closed by the purchaser following harvest operations. Temporary roads would be out-sloped, and roads and landings would be scarified, as necessary. Temporary roads, landings and, as necessary, major skid trails, would be seeded with a BLM-approved mixture of forbs and grasses by the Purchaser. Temporary roads, or portions thereof, would also be slashed-in.

- Existing private roads are currently maintained on a regular basis. Permission from the private landowners has been given to BLM for timber harvest use. Frequency of maintenance may need to be increased with initiation of logging operations. Operations would be done with standard ground-based commercial logging equipment.
- Cull logs and tops of trees would be offered for sale as biomass. Remaining slash would be piled and burned, placed on temporary roads, or lopped and scattered. Following the completion of harvest, piles would be burned during the winter by the BLM when adequate snow depth is present and consistent with burn plan requirements and burning permit stipulations.
- Post-harvest treatments may include a release and weed/thinning treatment (i.e. felling of residual undesirable live trees), and noxious weed control. The BLM Forestry Staff would monitor disturbed areas for noxious weeds for two growing seasons after project completion. If noxious weed control is found to be necessary, actions would be coordinated by the BLM.

Design Features for Resource Concerns

- Locate, flag, and protect any survey monuments (brass cap monuments, bearing trees, private monuments, etc.) that may exist in this project area.
- Maintain a 100 foot buffer away from riparian and wetland areas, no machinery may cross the buffers.
- Flag or paint trees along the boundaries of the treatment areas near private lands prior to implementation to avoid trespass onto private lands.
- The purchaser is responsible for fixing/replacing or paying for, any functioning and maintained improvement that is damaged by the Purchaser or his employees. The improvement shall be promptly paid for, or repaired/replaced, to a condition which, in the opinion of the Contracting Officer, is at least as good as the condition just prior to such damage.
- All temporary road construction would only occur during periods with dry soil conditions.
- Construction of snow roads would not involve soil disturbance.
- Winter logging would occur only when ground is frozen.
- Following sale closure, the area would be monitored for a minimum two years to determine if fencing and signage need to be installed at the BLM boundary by the BLM Forestry program to prevent new route establishment or unauthorized motorized or mechanized use since these routes are not be part of the public transportation system.
- Projects would be designed to blend with topographic forms and existing vegetation patterns and use both to screen the project as much as possible. Repeat the elements of form, line, color, and texture of the existing landscape.
- Openings in the canopy should have a natural appearance with uneven edges rather than straight lines. The shape should be an irregular pattern like the existing natural openings and should avoid straight-line edges. The edges of the stands should be varied and

random to soften and blend with the native vegetative mosaic. Favor existing healthy dominant trees such as aspen to shape the edges of areas where materials are to be removed. Blend with natural landscape features such as natural meadows or openings and rock outcrops when possible. This will create free form vegetative shapes that mimic natural patterns. Make clearing edges irregular and freeform, feathering and undulating edges where possible.

- All equipment and construction debris (man-made debris and trash, including old culverts) caused by timber operations would be removed from the site at sale completion.
- Where possible, clearing size and form of the landings should mimic that of the surrounding vegetative mosaic as seen from middle-ground and background views (distances greater than ½ mile). The shape of landings should be an irregular pattern like the existing natural openings and should avoid straight-line edges.
- When constructing skid trails, excessive cut/fill slopes would be avoided. Vary cut/fills to blend with the adjacent terrain, and leave in a roughened condition to facilitate revegetation. Stabilize fills and re-establish natural drainage configuration to the degree possible.

BLM Required Conditions of Approval to Mitigate Impacts to Cultural and Paleontological Resources

1. The applicant is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with the project that they will be subject to prosecution for knowingly disturbing archaeological sites or for collecting artifacts.
2. If any archaeological materials are discovered as a result of operations under this authorization, activity in the vicinity of the discovery will cease, and the BLM Archaeologist will be notified immediately. Work may not resume at that location until approved by the AO. The applicant will make every effort to protect the site from further impacts including looting, erosion, or other human or natural damage until BLM determines a treatment approach, and the treatment is completed. Unless previously determined in treatment plans or agreements, BLM will evaluate the cultural resources and, in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), select the appropriate mitigation option within 48 hours of the discovery. The applicant, under guidance of the BLM, will implement the mitigation in a timely manner. The process will be fully documented in reports, site forms, maps, drawings, and photographs. The BLM will forward documentation to the SHPO for review and concurrence.
3. Pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(g), the applicant must notify the AO, by telephone and written confirmation, immediately upon the discovery of human remains, funerary items, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony. Further, pursuant to 43 CFR 10.4(c) and (d), the operator must stop activities in the vicinity of the discovery and protect it for 30 days or until notified to proceed by the AO.
4. The applicant is responsible for informing all persons who are associated with project operations that they will be subject to prosecution for disturbing or collecting vertebrate or other scientifically-important fossils, collecting large amounts of petrified wood (over 25lbs./day, up to 250lbs./year), or collecting fossils for commercial purposes

on public lands. If any paleontological resources are discovered as a result of operations under this authorization, the applicant must immediately contact the appropriate BLM representative.

Categorical Exclusion Review

The Proposed Action qualifies as a categorical exclusion under 516 DM 11, Number: 11.9 (C)(9), “Commercial and non-commercial sanitation harvest of trees to control insects or disease not to exceed 250 acres, requiring no more than 0.5 miles of temporary road construction.” None of the following extraordinary circumstances in 516 DM 2, Appendix 2, apply.

The Proposed Action has been reviewed with the list of extraordinary circumstances (43 CFR 46.215) described in the table below.

Extraordinary Circumstance	YES	NO
a) Have significant adverse effects on public health and safety.		X
b) Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands; floodplains; national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.		X
c) Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.		X
d) Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
e) Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
f) Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
g) Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, in the National Register of Historic Places as determined by the bureau.		X
h) Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have adverse effects on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		X
i) Violate a Federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
j) Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations.		X
k) Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites.		X
l) Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species.		X

Interdisciplinary Review

The Proposed Action was presented to, and reviewed by, the Kremmling Field Office interdisciplinary team on 8/28/2014. A complete list of resource specialists who participated in this review is available upon request from the Kremmling Field Office. The table below lists resource specialists who provided additional remarks concerning cultural resources and special status species.

Name	Title	Resource	Date
Bill Wyatt	Archaeologist	Cultural Resources, Native American Religious Concerns, and Paleontology	10/22/2014
Darren Long	Wildlife Biologist	Special Status Wildlife Species	12/4/2014
Darren Long	Wildlife Biologist	Special Status Plant Species	12/4/2014
Paula Belcher	Hydrologist	Soil, Water, Air, and Riparian	12/19/2014
Hannah Schechter	Outdoor Recreation Planner	Visual Resources	10/9/2014
Zach Hughes	Natural Resource Specialist	Invasive Species	10/23/2014

Cultural Resources: A Class III cultural resource inventory (BLM #CR-15-04) was conducted for the area of potential effect. No new or previously recorded cultural resource sites were located within the project area. The project is a **no effect**, there are **no historic properties affected**.

Native American Religious Concerns: Tribal consultation was initiated on March 21, 2014, and to date no tribe has identified any area of traditional cultural or spiritual importance.

Paleontology: The geology of the area is made up of the Biotitic, Schist, and Migmatite Formation and the Granitic Rocks formation that are between 1700 to 1800 million years old. There are no known fossils within a Potential Fossil Yield Classification (PFYC) system of 1 with a condition class 3.

COMPLIANCE PLAN: Contract administration would occur on an on-going basis throughout the life of a sale, service, or stewardship contract. Purchasers and/or contractors would be subject to the stipulations and provisions contained within their contracts. On-going compliance inspections and monitoring would be conducted by the BLM Kremmling Field Office staff during and after operations. Specific mitigation developed in this document will be followed.

Compliance with NEPA

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 43 CFR 1610.5 or 516 DM 11.9, (C)(9), "Commercial and non-commercial sanitation harvest of trees to control insects or disease not to

exceed 250 acres, requiring no more than 0.5 miles of temporary road construction.” None of the following extraordinary circumstances in 516 DM 2, Appendix2, apply. The categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The Proposed Action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 43 CFR 46.215 apply.

NAME OF PREPARER: Tom Adamson, Forester

NAME OF ENVIRONMENTAL COORDINATOR: Susan Valente

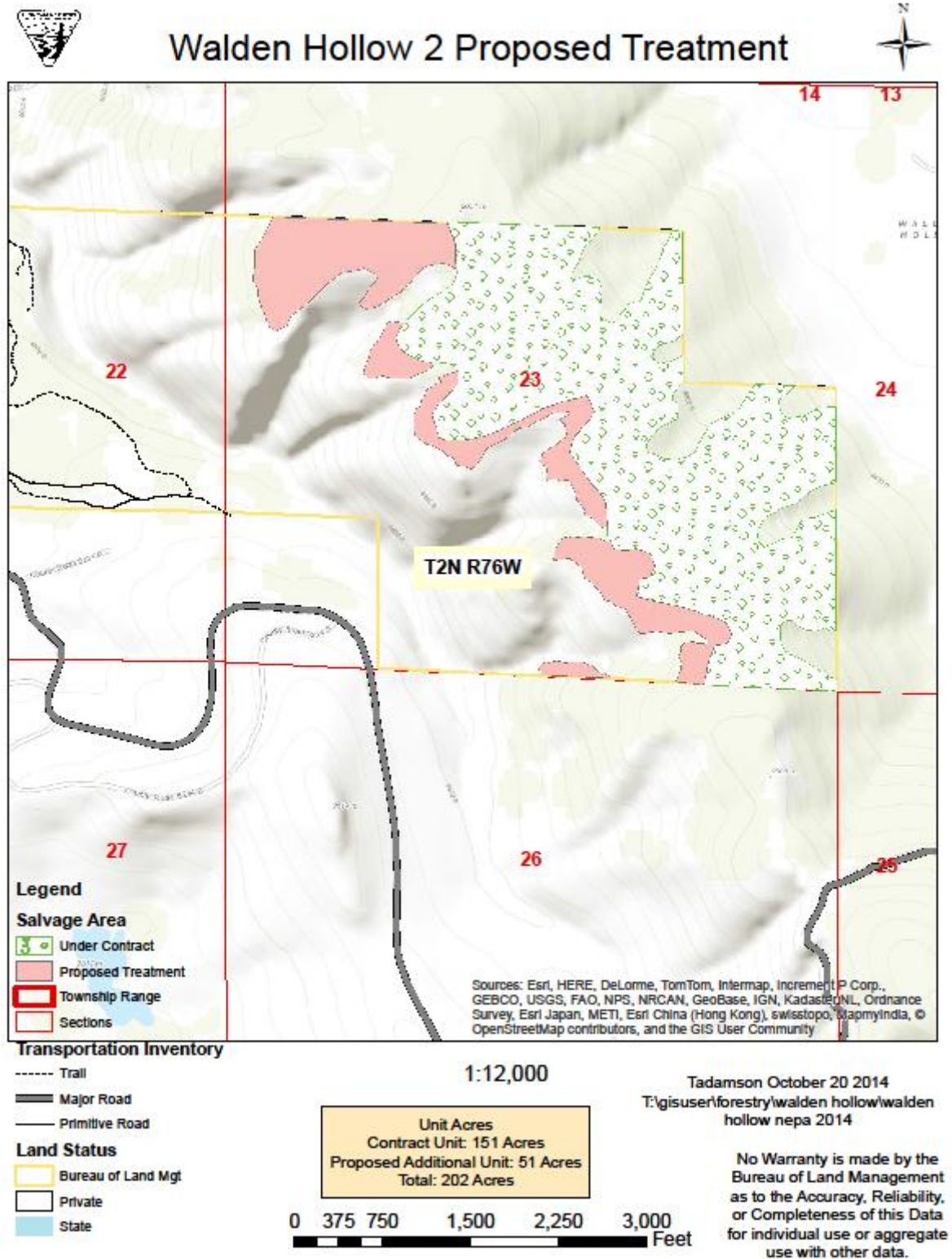
_____/s/ Stephanie Odell_____

Field Manager

____1/7/2015_____

Date

Appendix A. Figures



**U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management
Kremmling Field Office
2103 E. Park Ave, PO Box 68, Kremmling, CO 80459**

Decision Record

WALDEN HOLLOW SANITATION SALVAGE SALE 2 DOI-BLM-CO-N02-2014-0050-CX

Decision

It is my decision to implement the Proposed Action, DOI-BLM-LLCON02000-2014-050- CX, authorizing the harvest of dead, mistletoe infected, or diseased and wind throw susceptible trees on approximately 51 acres adjacent to private property in the Walden Hollow area near Lake Granby.

Compliance with Laws & Conformance with the Land Use Plan

This decision is in compliance with the Federal Land Management and Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act. It is also in conformance with the December 19, 1984; Updated February 1999 Kremmling Resource Management Plan (RMP).

Rationale

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9, C. This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The Proposed Action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 43 CFR 46.215 apply.

Administrative Remedies

Administrative remedies may be available to those who believe they will be adversely affected by this decision. Appeals may be made to the Office of Hearings and Appeals, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Interior, Board of Land Appeals (Board) in strict compliance with the regulations in 43 CFR Part 4. Notices of appeal must be filed in this office within 30 days after publication of this decision. If a notice of appeal does not include a statement of reasons, such statement must be filed with this office and the Board within 30 days after the notice of appeal is filed. The notice of appeal and any statement of reasons, written arguments, or briefs must also be served upon the Regional Solicitor, Rocky Mountain Region, U.S. Department of Interior, 755 Parfet Street, Suite 151, Lakewood, CO 80215.

The effective date of this decision (and the date initiating the appeal period) will be the date this notice of decision is posted on the BLM online NEPA register:

- https://www.blm.gov/epl-front-office/eplanning/lup/lup_register.do

Signature of Authorized Official

/s/ Stephanie Odell

Field Manager

1/7/2015
Date